

Minutes for the Meeting of the Mayor's Task Force for the Stamford

Animal Control Center, August 21, 2014, noon

Democratic Caucus Room, Government Center

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM. In attendance were Co-chairs Eileen Heaphy and Art Layton; Director of Operations Theresa Geary, CT Humane Society (CHS); Dr. Steve Zeide, Bull's Head Pet Hospital, and Mary Ann Kleinschmitt, New Canaan Animal Control Officer. Also in attendance were SACC acting chief Tilford Cobb, Deputy Corporation Counsel Vikki Cooper, Director of Human Resources Clemon Williams and SPD Tom Barcello. Members of the public were also in attendance.

Co-chair Heaphy reported that a representative of SPCA-CT had been invited to attend but no one showed up during the course of the meeting. She believed there was some mix-up in the exchange of emails. Task force members were asked for their comments on the public hearing two weeks prior. Ms. Kleinschmitt challenged a statement from one of the public speakers that the SACC wasn't using social media to place animals. Acting ACO Cobb confirmed that the shelter was using social media to help find potential adopters. She also challenged the claimed cost of medical treatment for cats. It was agreed by the task force that feral cats were a problem; we need an ordinance to address cat procedures. She also asked Mr. Cobb if SACC took in rabbits and reptiles. He confirmed that it did. Ms. Heaphy also commented on her disappointment that no one from the public expressed any concern about the people who had been bitten.

HR director Clemon Williams updated the task force on hiring plans for the SACC. He confirmed the kennel maintenance person was hired and is working; a candidate for the seasonal person for volunteers had been identified and an offer of employment made. He expected that person to begin working at SACC after Labor Day.

Mr. Cobb, SACC, said surrender calls are down; He has been referring owners to other adoption organizations.

Ms. Geary and Dr. Zeide both said more attention is needed for cats.

Art Layton concurred and said we needed ordinances related to Stamford residents who fed feral cats and other animals but provided no further assistance or allowed trapping for neutering and release.

Regarding the Volunteer Waiver and the Interim Volunteer Agreement, the task force reviewed the documents presented by the Law Department. There was general concurrence with the drafts, to include adding language suggested by Mr. Leydon and Ms. Taylor in emails. There was also discussed the need for a statement of philosophy and mission for the SACC. Ms. Geary agreed to help Mr. Cobb find an appropriate statement. Ms. Heaphy offered to meet with

Corporation Counsel before Labor Day, with task force member Ms. Taylor, to finalize the Volunteer Waiver and Agreement. Final drafts would be sent by email to the task force members for their final approval. This step would enable the city to bring volunteers back into the SACC.

Ms. Heaphy then raised the topic of the Asilomar Accords, which is a combined list of principles and actions, based on terminology agreed to by a cross-section of animal control officers, animal rights organizations, rescue organizations, veterinarians, etc. She expressed her belief that the accords are a major step forward beyond the No-Kill/Kill debate. Ms. Geary further amplified the history, purpose and meaning of the accords. She highlighted the practical value of using common definitions. Mr. Layton supported the Asilomar concept of building an alliance between all groups involved in animal welfare.

Ms. Heaphy spoke briefly about sites for a new shelter, and suggested that we form a subgroup of the co-chairs and Ms. Taylor to visit all the potential sites in September. All other task force members would also be invited to join the tours as their schedules permit.

On other issues, Ms. Geary asked if the city budget was adequate for the needs of the current SACC and any future one. She asked if we are great city and can we use this momentum to become an example to all of CT for animal care and shelter. Ms. Heaphy asked Dr. Zeide if he could start focusing on animal illnesses at shelters and clarifying a role for Stamford veterinarians at the SACC.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Art Layton, Co-chair